



**(U) Partnering, Mentoring and Advising
in
Operation Enduring Freedom**

6 October 2011

This unclassified document has been reviewed in accordance with guidance contained in United States Central Command Security Classification Regulation 380-14 dated 13 January 2009. [REDACTED]

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Purpose: (U// [REDACTED]) To inform Deputy Commandants (DCs) Combat Development and Integration (CD&I), Plans, Policies, and Operations (PP&O), Installations and Logistics (I&L) Aviation, Commanding General (CG), Training and Education Command (TECOM), Director of Intelligence, and others on results of a collection effort to document lessons and observations from units and organizations involved in the partnering and advising mission in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).

Bottom Line Up Front:

(U) The Marine Corps has a long and storied history of partnering, mentoring, and advising foreign militaries. Marines served as the officer corps of the *Gendarmerie d'Haiti* and integrated at platoon-level with South Vietnamese Popular Forces. These are only two of many possible examples, but they suffice to illustrate the diversity of relevant Marine Corps experience. This enduring legacy influences Marine counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan as well as theater security cooperation exercises throughout the world.

Key Points:

(U// [REDACTED]) Many of the interviewees stated that the partner mission has been cited as the primary bid for success in OEF. As such, it should be the focus of effort and should be sourced and resourced accordingly. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

(U// [REDACTED]) There are a number of Marine Corps organizations in the advisor training arena, not all of which are involved in the training of teams for Afghanistan. There is the Marine Corps Training and Advisory Group (MCTAG), the advisor training cells (ATCs) in each Marine expeditionary force (MEF) and the Advisor Training Group (ATG) at Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training Command. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

(U// [REDACTED]) Advisor teams should be manned, trained, and equipped to the assigned mission. Identify them early, provide sufficient time to train and to properly resource them.

(U// [REDACTED]) Partnering and advising skills should be formalized and institutionalized, similar to combined arms or other tasks. Working by, with, and through host nation counterparts should not be restricted to the current environment but developed to include other scenarios such as deploying with a Marine expeditionary unit (MEU) to the western Pacific Ocean or the Black Sea.

(U// [REDACTED]) Afghans are not Marines. The Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) have to be good enough to defeat the enemy that they face but do not have to be a mirror image of the capabilities of the Marine Corps.

(U// [REDACTED]) It is difficult to ask the ANSF to perform the same missions as the Marines if they lack equipment. However, do not provide them capabilities that they will not be able to afford or sustain. Whatever is provided needs to be culturally appropriate so that it will endure beyond the departure of coalition forces. This concept applies to equipment, tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) as well as the conduct of operations – “let them do it.”

[REDACTED]

(U// [REDACTED]) The ANSF's lack of equipment made it more difficult to partner and task them to conduct the same missions as the Marines. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(U// [REDACTED]) As OEF coalition forces transition and drawdown, advisor teams will still be required. However there will be fewer units in the area of operations (AO) from which to source the teams. The battlespace owners currently provide most of the teams. What happens when the parent unit leaves? Where there were three to five battlespace owners but now there will be only one, who will accept ownership of the partner, mentoring, and advising tasks and capabilities? Will the model shift to an organization similar to the one that existed in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)?

(U// [REDACTED]) Being responsible for both the kinetic fight and the development of host nation security forces in the AO was challenging for the battlespace owner.

(U// [REDACTED]) Enablers, especially translators, were an important factor in the successful accomplishment of the partnering and advising mission.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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(U) [REDACTED]


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Table of Contents

(Note: Click on the headings below to go to the respective section of this report.)


Prologue	6
Background	7
Operations and Employment.....	8
Organization and Manning.....	10
Training	12
Equipment and Sustainment.....	14
TTPs and Best Practices	15
Recommendations (DOTMLPF Pillars)	16
Summary.....	16
References	17
Endnotes.....	17



Prologue

(U) This report is one of many publications addressing a wide array of topics assembled and produced by the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned. The MCCLL library is not a sole or authoritative source, was not designed as such, and does not purport to be. MCCLL provides a vehicle to inform the operating forces in the queue for subsequent deployments, the DOTMLPF stakeholders, and the advocates of the unvarnished experiences of Marines engaged in operations. Reporting or relaying these experiences may provide the impetus to effect a change in any or all of the DOTMLPF pillars.

(U) MCCLL relies on the individual Marine and commands to provide their hard-learned lessons in order to disseminate them throughout the Marine Corps. The goal is to get these knowledge jewels into the MCCLL Lesson Management System in order to disseminate them in such a timely manner as to make them invaluable to the next Marine in the deployment queue.



Director, Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned

Background

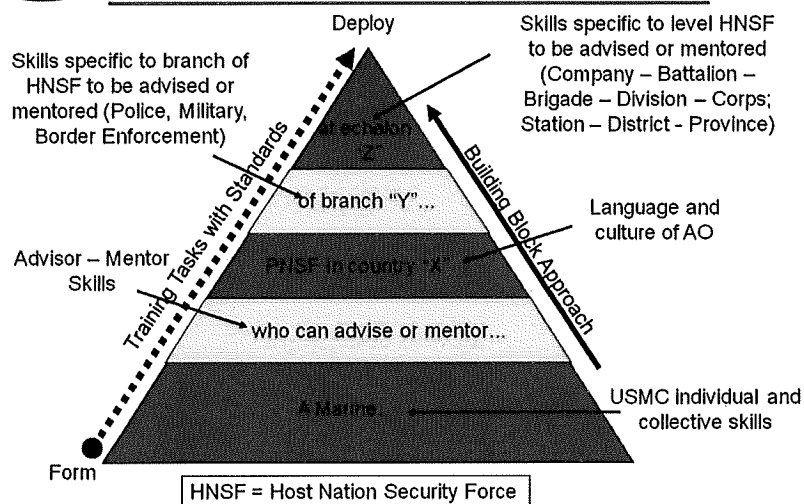
(U) For nearly a decade the Marine Corps has been participating in the partnering, mentoring, and advising of host nation security forces in Iraq and Afghanistan as part of OIF and OEF.

Since that time changes and improvements have been made in the training and preparation of advisor teams and the Marine Corps has significantly increased its efforts in Afghanistan as it has transitioned from OIF.

(U) The collection focused on members of the various teams as well as tactical commanders, staff responsible for ANSF development, and the training centers and groups responsible for preparing the teams for deployment. Interviews of 18 commanders and staff personnel were conducted in Afghanistan; Camp Pendleton, CA; 29 Palms, CA; and Camp Lejeune, NC, during May and June 2011.



A Trained Marine Advisor



(U) Figure 1 ATG "Advisor 101" Brief

(U) Guidance from the Commander, International Security Force Afghanistan (COMISAF) requires that coalition units partner with like ANSF units, battalion to battalion for example. The ISAF Partnership Directive defines partnering as a shared understanding of the Afghan people, the history, the culture, the terrain, the resources and the insurgency. Units will live, train, plan, and operate together. They will bear equal responsibility for planning missions, for

executing missions, and for achieving objectives. Marine Corps units also provide partner/mentor teams.¹

(U) There are two types of teams, enabler teams and embedded teams. Enabler teams are globally sourced and their command relationships may vary. For example a border mentor team (BMT) working with an Afghan Border Police (ABP) battalion, or kandak, may initially be attached to one U.S. unit and then be put in direct support of another depending on the location of their Afghan counterparts.

(U) Embedded teams are unit sourced and remain with that unit. An infantry battalion, for example, forms an embedded training team (ETT), out of its own table of organization, to work with its partnered Afghan National Army (ANA) battalion as well as two police mentor teams (PMTs) to partner with Afghan National Police (ANP) units in their area of operations (AO). Regimental combat teams (RCTs) and higher headquarters also source ETTs as well as

partner with corresponding ANSF units. In Regional Command South West (RC (SW)), RCTs partnered with brigades and Task Force Leatherneck (Marine division) with the Afghan 215th Corps.

(U// [REDACTED]) "Partner" and "partnering" are often used with various meanings. In one sense, BMTs "partner" with the ABP but are technically mentors or advisors. "Partnering" describes the relationship between a maneuver element and the Afghan units operating in its battlespace. For example, BMT-2 mentors the 2d ABP Kandak, which is partnered with 2d Battalion, 1st Marines in Garmsir.

Operations and Employment

(U// [REDACTED]) Unlike the model used during OIF, when teams were globally sourced, the embedded teams in OEF were part of the individual unit/battlespace owner who was partnered with ANSF units in the AO. This arrangement placed the responsibility on the commander and ensured a unity of effort between the teams and the unit. It also gave commanders the flexibility to resource and deploy the teams commensurate with the local tactical conditions.

Commanders were judged on both combat operations and the partnering effort.²



(U) Figure 2 Police Mentor Team

(U// [REDACTED]) A primary goal of the training team is developing the ANSF. The primary issue for the battlespace owner is security. Good communication ensures that these are well coordinated. If they are not, either the teams may be overly exposed in a kinetic environment or the battalion may be performing functions that can be handed over to the developing host nation forces.

(U// [REDACTED]) ANA, ANP and Marine battlespace were not always aligned and the partnering relationship was challenging due to: the lack of congruence, the separate chains of command and the forming of new Afghan units. For example, there were six Marine infantry battalions deployed with Task Force Leatherneck (TFL), although there was scheduled to be eight infantry kandaks (battalions) in the Afghan corps with which they were partnered, leaving an ongoing requirement for two globally sourced infantry kandak advisor teams. ISAF guidance was to "partner to the greatest extent possible." RC (SW) units formed ad-hoc teams and employed other coalition forces to cover the existing gaps.

(U// [REDACTED]) As coalition forces drawdown, the partnering effort has to be separated from battlespace owners and individual units. This effort will resemble the OIF model where teams will not be linked to conventional forces and will have to be able to operate independently.³

(U// [REDACTED]) The sourcing of teams from battlespace owners is not a sustainable model as coalition forces transition. First, there will be fewer units in each AO, and the ones that remain will not be able to source all of the required teams. Second, if the personnel in the teams

[REDACTED]

“belong” to that unit, when that unit departs there will be a question of whether the team(s) remains or whether it will redeploy with their parent battalion.⁴

(U/[REDACTED]) The partnering effort consisted of four phases. Phase one was an assessment phase to establish the current state of the Afghan unit, whether it was a brigade, kandak, or one of the ANP organizations. Phase two included training and combined operations led by coalition forces. In phase three the roles were reversed and the Afghan unit would take the lead with regards to planning and execution while the coalition partner unit would be supporting. The final phase was independent operations conducted by Afghan forces with coalition over-watch.

(U/[REDACTED]) One of the first hurdles the partner teams had to overcome was the realization that ANSF were not Marines, i.e. cultural differences, professionalism, proficiency, etc. The teams need to plan for their limitations; tactical discipline and preparation were not taken as seriously, especially in areas that were less kinetic. Attitude was also important. The advisor had to understand that he was not in charge. He was here for the host nation forces.

(U/[REDACTED]) The concepts of partnering and advising are, or should be, applied differently, depending on the security capacity of the ANSF unit. A newly formed ANA kandak's capabilities will be limited and require more partnering and mentoring. The responsibility for providing that resides with the partnered unit; the battalion commander partners with the kandak commander, staff with staff, and so on down to the fire team level. As the kandak's security capacity increases to a higher-level, partnership should give way to advising.



(U) Figure 3 Vehicle checkpoint class

Advisor teams could then be assigned to the kandak. Often the battalion delegates the partnership role to a training team, which lacks the personnel capacity to adequately partner, and the ANSF unit is not sufficiently developed to benefit from a small advisor team.⁵ [MCCLL note: To demonstrate the importance of this difference, Border Mentoring Team-2 was renamed Border Advisor Team-2 as the 2d ABP Kandak became more proficient.]

(U/[REDACTED]) The development of measures of effectiveness (MOEs) was a challenge. There were a number of changes in the reporting requirements assigned by higher headquarters which made it difficult to track trends in ANSF progress. These changes created a shifting baseline.⁶

(U/[REDACTED]) First Marine Division's (MarDiv) ANSF Cell developed a framework and methodology for assessing ANSF progress that laid out objectives in line with the division campaign objectives.⁷ The MOEs were both objective and subjective measures, which were assessed by the commands and an assessment team from the division. *“Wherever possible, we attempted to construct metrics that were empirically quantifiable, through a normal data collection resident in weekly reports.”* [REDACTED] ANSF Director, 1st MarDiv (Fwd)

[REDACTED]

(U/[REDACTED]) The Commanders' Unit Assessment Tool (CUAT), an ISAF Joint Command requirement, was seen as a potentially useful assessment tool. However, it provided limited utility due to multiple changes to rating definition levels (RDLs) as well as the lack of a complimentary development framework and resulted in a reporting tool that did not provide significant benefit. The tool was not relative to, nor directly linked to, any published ANSF development plans and lacked a consistent means by which to determine progress. Additionally, the RDL changes prohibited any historical trend analysis and the high degree of changes in metrics imbedded in the RDLs often produced perceived drops in the performance of an ANSF unit, even when that unit's performance stayed the same or increased slightly.⁸

(U/[REDACTED]) The Afghans were very leadership dependent. Even after a combat operation center (COC) had been established and was functional, subordinates called the commander directly on his cell phone, and that was the manner in which he exercised command and control.⁹

Organization and Manning

(U/[REDACTED]) *"Members of a partner team require a tremendous amount of patience, thick skin, and initiative. There is no field manual to reference on how to partner."*

[REDACTED]
ANSF Director, 1st MarDiv (Fwd)

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

(U/[REDACTED]) Many of the interviewees said that the partner mission has been cited as the primary bid for success in OEF, and to that end it should be the focus of effort and resourced accordingly.

[REDACTED]

The teams that were sourced from battalions, and other units, did not receive "extra" Marines, for the most part, to man these teams and so they competed against the requirements of the three line companies, a weapons company, and the headquarters and service company.

(U/[REDACTED]) The teams need to be properly manned, trained, and equipped to the assigned mission. It is key to identify them early, provide sufficient time to train and to properly resource them. Marines assigned to the teams should be able to work with a foreign military, to negotiate, and to act maturely.

(U/[REDACTED]) The ANSF cells at the headquarters staffs also need to be adequately resourced.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

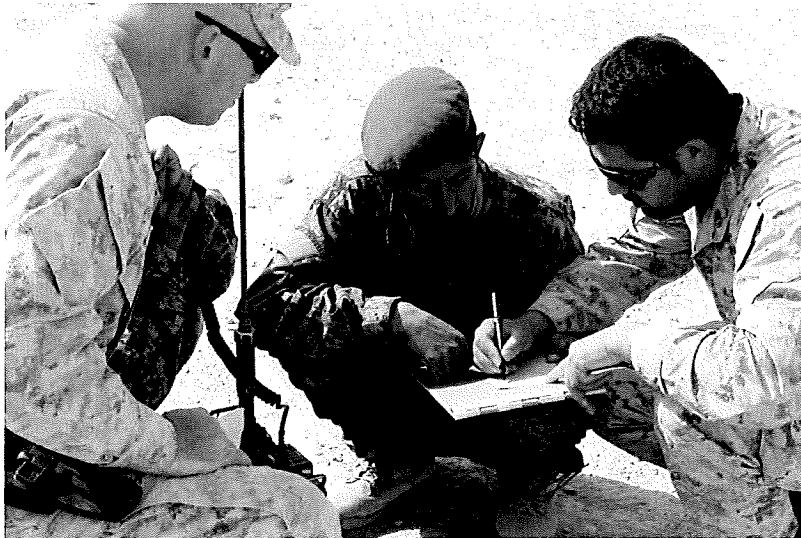
[REDACTED] These ANSF organizations were largely ad hoc; there were no slots on their manning document. A recommendation for the manning of the RCT cell: four personnel, one to serve as overall coordinator, one for police matters, one for army matters, and one for facilities and logistics. This would be smaller, but similar to how the division cell was organized. In order to better perform their functions, having previous advisor experience should be a prerequisite.

(U/[REDACTED]) Having a capable logistician at the division level was key to dealing with the logistical challenges up and down the chain of command. An engineer is helpful to manage facilities. The ANSF development officers at the division level should be no less than in the grade of majors (O-4s).¹⁰

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(U/[REDACTED]) The globally sourced teams present a challenge in that the Marines are from various units and locations: reservists, volunteers, individual augments. When forming a team it is important to analyze the mission in order to determine personnel requirements with regard to staff functions and other duties. A team could arrive on the first day of training, comprised of lance corporals without officers or staff NCOs assigned. Coming from a wide variety of backgrounds, MOSs do not always match with job responsibilities; an aircraft mechanic may have to fill a logistics billet.¹¹

(U/[REDACTED]) Some of those interviewed stated that the teams advising a police unit, a BMT or PMT, will need to have personnel with experience in the policing mission. This is a specialized area and providing instruction on searches and seizures, proper handcuffing and arrest procedures, and other police skills requires prior knowledge and training.¹²



(U) Figure 4 Working with an interpreter

(U/[REDACTED]) Many of the police forces, and other Afghan soldiers, were still at a very low skill level. Police officers, either military or civilian, were not required in most cases because the current focus was not policing. The training goals were *"How do they survive, and how do they fight the Taliban in their area?"* As units develop, more specialists are required- military policemen, investigators, and administrators.¹³

(U/[REDACTED]) As the Afghans develop skills in other areas, team composition will also have to change. The addition of artillery units and other capabilities will require artillerymen and Marines with other skill sets. What teams generally required was a trained Marine (every Marine a rifleman) with the right mindset who could interact, teach patrolling, pre-combat checks/inspections (PCCs/PCIs), and other basic infantry skills. At the brigade level and other headquarters levels, it was important to have staff duty experts to work directly with staff counterparts.¹⁴

(U/[REDACTED]) Interpreters, while important to all the units operating in Afghanistan, play an especially important role with the advisor teams. Having interpreters working and training with the teams from the beginning of PTP until deployment will be beneficial even if they do not actually deploy with the unit. They will be able to conduct classes on culture and language, as well as assisting the Marines in how to employ and work with an interpreter.¹⁵

(U/[REDACTED]) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Interpreter availability was a constant issue, and the turnover was substantial. The 1st MarDiv (Fwd) ANSF Cell, with feedback from its subordinate commands, developed a table of organization for translators which actually reduced the number required. Previously, commanders had a pool of interpreters with no guidance or document to

[REDACTED]

determine where they were supposed to be used. Commanders still had the flexibility to adjust and weight the main effort, but now had a framework from which to operate.¹⁶

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(U/[REDACTED]) One of the advantages to being sourced by the battlespace owner, the command relationship, could also be a drawback. Being part of the battalion and not just working with it, the teams could be assigned duties not related to advising. One team was tasked as the quick reaction force (QRF) which had nothing to do with combat advising. It was difficult to advise the ANSF while having to plan around crisis responses within the AO with limited manpower.¹⁷

(U/[REDACTED]) At the unit level, the responsibility lies with the commander to decide who is assigned to the teams. Most battalions resourced these teams sufficiently but depending on the commander and his view of the importance of this mission and that of the commanders above him, the team was either well sourced both in numbers and capabilities or it received less attention.¹⁸

(U/[REDACTED]) Experience is an important factor in being a successful advisor/mentor. Mentoring an Afghan company commander is difficult if the advisor has not been a platoon commander himself.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Training

(U/[REDACTED]) *"Partnership is a mentality. It is hard and requires patience; Partnership is successful if you create a climate of its importance early in PTP. At Enhanced Mojave Viper (EMV,) doing a partnered clear (i.e. in conjunction with the partnered unit) instead of a clear and ensuring that we teach the young Marines 'why' it is important. Partnership starts in PTP not in country."*

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

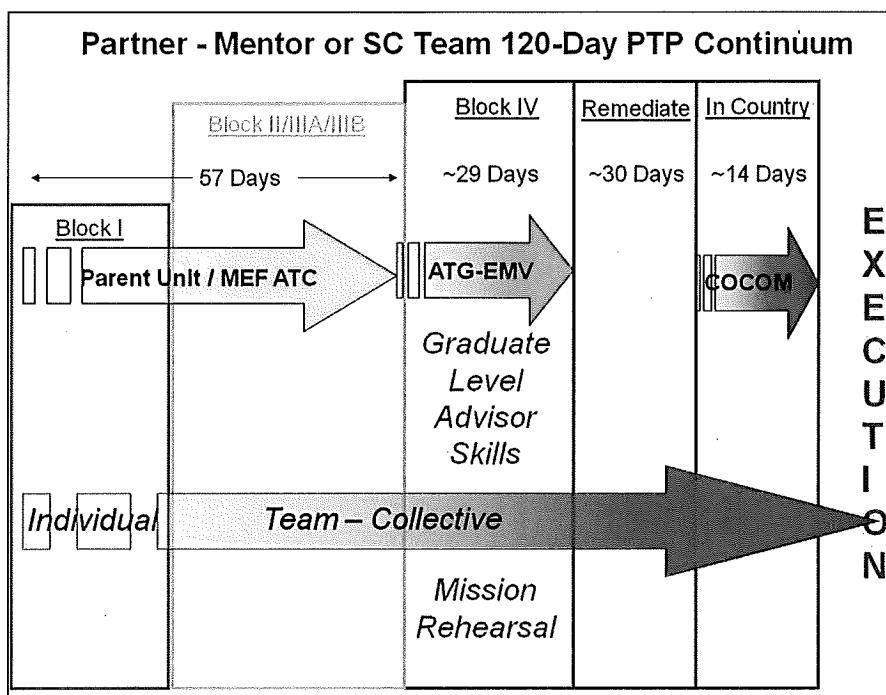
(U/[REDACTED]) There were a number of organizations in the advisor training arena, not all of which were involved in the training of teams to deploy to Afghanistan: the MCTAG, three different

MEF ATCs, the ATG in 29 Palms which trains the majority of the teams, and the Security Cooperation Education Training Center (SCETC) in Quantico. [MCCLL note: MARADMIN 454/11 announced that as of 1 October 2011, SCETC will be disestablished, MCTAG will become the Marine Corps Security Cooperation Group (MCSCG) and assume responsibility for security cooperation functions.] MCTAG and SCETC assisted in the preparation of advisors for other areas.

(U/) For unit-sourced teams, the current PTP includes training conducted by the unit (usually an infantry battalion), the parent MEF ATC, and a Block IV assessment and training by the ATG. One of the potential training pitfalls of Marines being sourced from a battalion, the “advisor training system” could assume that, “*Oh, they came from the infantry battalion, so they’ve got to be better trained and the battalion will take care of their training deficiencies.*”

The
looks at
teams

battalion
the
from the



(U) Figure 5 Advisor PTP Continuum (ATG “Advisor 101” Brief)

perspective of “*Hey, these specialized guys are going away to this specialized training; they’ll take care of the training, they’ll take care of the needs.*”²⁰

(U/) Enabler teams, those teams that are globally sourced from disparate organizations, are scheduled to receive nine weeks of training at the MEF ATC, and everything prior to Block IV at ATG: shoot, move, communicate, and language and culture advisor skills. The embedded teams, sourced from the battalions, receive the basics within the battalion and then a 3-week program at the MEF ATCs prior to EMV and ATG at 29 Palms. Due to manning issues, especially with the embedded teams, many do not conduct the training at the ATCs.²¹

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Equipment and Sustainment

(U/[REDACTED]) Training the Afghans was the “easy part.” The Marines brought the expertise but when the ANSF did not have the equipment and resources, the uniforms, weapons, vehicles, radios and communication equipment, it limited their capability to be trained and to operate.

(U/[REDACTED]) The ANSF’s lack of equipment made it more difficult to partner. For example, one Afghan unit rated 65 HMMWVs but only had two that were operational. Lacking equipment such as metal detectors, fragmentation vests, and other personnel protective equipment, made it difficult for them to perform the same missions as the Marines.



(U) Figure 6 HMMWV maintenance class

(U/[REDACTED]) There were issues with the Afghans hoarding gear and equipment at all levels, locked up in containers. “Owning” their equipment lent prestige and power to the commander.²³

(U/[REDACTED]) Whenever a new ANSF unit was fielded, it may not have had all of its equipment. The priority was placed on the creation of units to show progress but the units were often under trained and under equipped. For example, an Afghan route clearance company was

fielded, although it was subsequently rated as untrained. TFL had to remediate and equip this company. This type of situation occurred so frequently that the division began to expect and plan for it.²⁴

(U/[REDACTED]) ANSF logistics challenges, particularly with the army, were a major concern. Some police units were better able to equip themselves. The army had systemic problems all the way to the national level. Afghan forces were often deficient in both administration and logistics. Their capabilities were at the crawl / walk stages in most districts.²⁵ The 215th Corps had difficulty supplying its kandaks in a distributed mobile environment. The Marine division, early on, had to provide a lot of assistance.²⁶

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(U/[REDACTED]) The teams' equipment was generally organic to the tactical commands that sourced them. These commands were responsible for the maintenance requirements. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The establishment of intermediate maintenance activities (IMAs) improved the maintenance situation throughout the AO.²⁸

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

TTPs and Best Practices

(U/[REDACTED]) *"Teach the Afghans to teach themselves. I would much rather have an Afghan sergeant teach a course 80 percent as well as a Marine does."* [REDACTED] Team Leader, Embedded Training Team, [REDACTED]

(U/[REDACTED]) *"If you go in there with the attitude that this is how we do it in the Marine Corps, or this is how coalition forces train or operate, without understanding Afghan culture and how they do business, then you're going to set yourself up for failure. ... Again, it may not be a solution*



that you would ever see that would be acceptable in the Marine Corps or another U.S. force or coalition force, but the bottom line is, if it's an Afghan solution and it works for them, and they're willing to go out and execute, then you've got a workable solution." [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] OIC, Brigade Advisor Team [REDACTED]

(U/[REDACTED]) Make contact early and often with the team that is being relieved in order to gain and maintain situational awareness. This is also

(U) Figure 7 Classroom Instruction

important for the staff sections responsible for ANSF partnering and development.

(U/[REDACTED]) There is a higher tolerance for degrees of corruption among the Afghans than among US forces. Corruption is systemic to the Afghan way of doing business and will be difficult to change if it can be at all. Planners made the assumption that everyone was corrupt, rightly or wrongly, and factored it into their planning effort.³⁰

(U/[REDACTED]) It was important to manage the perception of corruption by the Afghan people to prevent undermining the overall effort. The focus of attention was on corruption that affected the people. For example, if people complained to the Marines that the local police were "shaking

